

# franciscan

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## CARING COMMUNITIES

David Randall describes the founding of CARA and the kind of caring offered to people affected by AIDS/HIV. Clare Hall-Matthews reflects on her four years as a member of the L'Arche Community in Kent. Annette Figueiredo writes about the response of a London parish community to the needs of the homeless in their area.

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## Pointing the Church to love

by David Randall

AIDS has been part of my life for 10 years. As a gay priest working in Notting Hill from 1977 it was only natural that I would meet some of the first people directly affected by this virus, which back in the early 80s we imagined was something which inveterate US travellers imported to our community, and could never really take hold here.

Even in 1986 when a friend asked me if I could give a home to his brother returning from the States with HTLIII virus (as HIV was then called) I did not foresee quite how directly I would become affected personally.

Richard came and lived in my vicarage, he played a full part in the life of the local church, and within weeks the issues had been raised, and we had a choice. Either to brush them under the carpet and pretend, or

face them, and help people deal with them. It was at this time that the houses of our parishes were leafleted with a scaremongering petition announcing that a group of people were seeking planning permission for a hospice for AIDS 'victims' in Lancaster Road, encouraging people to fight this proposal.

It was a test for the whole church in Notting Hill, and the magnificent ecumenical response in cooperation with other com-

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munity groups and individuals in the area led to a delegation, which included Richard and his father, with a supporting petition which outweighed the opponents 4 to 1, and was an important part of the beginnings of what is now the miracle story of London Lighthouse.

It was Mark Santer, then Bishop of Kensington, whom I first heard at an Area Synod raise the issue of AIDS as crucial to the Church, and it was he who encouraged me to take a sabbatical leave to study what the Church's response to the challenge of AIDS might be in the light of my experience with Richard and Lighthouse. I spent some months with the San Francisco General Hospital Chaplaincy where I experienced very painfully the reality which AIDS had brought to that wonderful city.

I also experienced in the Diocese of California a church which was unconditionally responding to the crisis, from its bishop on, a church where it was perfectly possible to be open about diagnosis, sexuality and vulnerability, and in so recognising, to use this reality within the Body of Christ to share the journeys of others equally affected and so to provide ministry. I also became aware of the dangers of 'burn out', and the need for self-care which springs from self-knowledge. We cannot do it on our own.

By the time I returned to London to work for a while as an auxiliary at S. Stephen's Hospital HIV unit, I knew that I was being called not to write a report on the Church's response but to try and practise it. So CARA was born, initially as a support group for my leaving parochial life and going out on my own, and to raise money for a salary which my church would not pay. I found myself on the margins of two worlds - a church which would not officially endorse or encourage my ministry to people affected by HIV and AIDS, and a community of people living with the virus who were at best suspicious and at worst hostile. There were others too, not least Fr Bill Kirkpatrick whose gentle encouragement saw me through this painful transition, and who continues to inspire so many of us, whose ministry is well described by Kenneth Leech as 'on the edge' (Care and Conflict - Leaves from a pastoral notebook, DLT).

### A watershed

In October 1988 the London Lighthouse opened its new building in Notting Hill to provide a comprehensive service for people affected by HIV, combining terminal and respite residential care with volunteer training for home support work and a range of counselling, complementary therapies and support networks. It was a watershed in the movement to meet the challenge of HIV and AIDS, and its story when it comes to be told will read like a 20th century secular Exodus. It also marked the moment when CARA emerged from being a support net-



A CARA service user

work and community of people bound together by the challenge of HIV and AIDS, and addressed the desire to meet our fundamental spiritual and pastoral needs.

Two things occurred at the same time. Andrew Henderson, one of the founders of Lighthouse, and in whose basement Lighthouse was created, invited CARA to use the basement as its headquarters. We not only inherited a building, but an ethos which had grown out of the living network which had been established in the early days of Lighthouse. We often refer to our basement as 'the womb', for so much new life has come from there from people dealing with fundamental issues of death and dying; sexuality; dependencies; disabilities; oppression and injustice, and the meaning of life itself.

Secondly, in the autumn of 1988 I was diagnosed HIV+, and was faced with the challenge of living with the virus within my own body. I went through the horrific isolation which so many newly diagnosed people face and, in spite of all the experience I had gained in my ministry, I felt as if I had been condemned to death. I was faced with making real for myself the theory I had so readily imparted to others. It was indeed the challenge of a lifetime and, without the support of a community of people, many of them living with the virus, I do not believe I could have survived.

CARA means 'friendship' in Gaelic, 'dearest heart' in Italian, and so we chose this name for our pastoral ministry which seeks on behalf of the churches to offer to people affected in so many ways by HIV and AIDS the unconditional loving spirit of

God. And many of the teachers on our training courses, and the volunteers offering pastoral care are themselves, like myself, 'wounded healers'.

We also offer our experience to church groups through our education and training programmes. Typically our courses and workshops involve a wide variety of people living with HIV on the training teams, and their aim is to support people to face fears and prejudices that prevent change in attitudes. The church has a ready-made universal network which sadly cannot always be relied upon. It is our hope to encourage the churches to develop a trusted network which will create communities, homes and hearts where together we can realise our full potential as God-created, loved human beings, and unlock the potential sources of support which the church has at its disposal.

I believe that AIDS may be the opportunity of our generation to point the Church to love; the real nature of loving which is not about morals or about rules, but the unconditional love of which Christ is the supreme icon.

Fr Gordon Twist, a Salvatorian religious, is CARA's full time Roman Catholic pastor. He writes in the June edition of CARA News: 'CARA has put me in touch, sometimes painfully, with my humanity and vulnerability, taught me a lot about my own need for support. This experience is both deeply human and deeply spiritual, a combination which characterises the identity of the minister - ordained or otherwise - and the nature of churches at their best: at their worst they are neither, or overemphasise

one at the expense of the other.'

It is sometimes very hard, especially facing the sickness and death of our friends as a daily reality, so CARA is a place where many tears are shed, yet it is a place where laughter is real and life is lived.

Dietmar Bolle, a pioneer AIDS activist, and founder of the international movement for people with HIV and AIDS, died in January of this year. He wrote in one of his poems about the contrasting images of being a Hero. It was read by Br Colin Wilfred SSF at his memorial service. It sums up the CARA spirit:

*And at present there are no wars to be won, no fair maiden to be rescued from any terrible dragons, and no people to be killed in the name of fatherland and glory. Just me, trying to survive, the little hideous hazardous journey which we call life. I haven't got nerves of steel, and very often I lie in my bed crying. Heroes don't cry. Very often it feels that I can't cope with facing destiny and despair. Very often I look into the mirror and find my body a little more disfigured, another lesion on arm or leg, a little bit more weight loss, feeling more tired than the day before, and absolutely hopeless. Heroes are never hopeless, never helpless, they always have an answer.*

*But one thing my friend told me I have got in common with Heroes. Heroes face the danger, they don't run away. And he thinks me facing my life-threatening illness much braver than any deed of any war Hero, my courage to go on living much more courageous than that of any dragon hunter, and me looking into the mirror the greatest heroic deed he has ever heard of.*

*And I think of all the other ones of us, who face the same kind of little hideous hazardous journeys with the same kind of strength and vulnerability. Yes we are Heroes, just another kind of hero.*

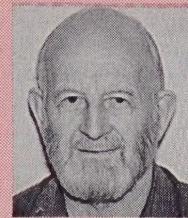
CARA comes from the Church and is for the Church. I hope and pray for a day when the 'Church official' will affirm our ministry by actually providing financial resources for at least a salary or two, but meanwhile we are the church also, and I thank God for the parishes, religious communities and individuals throughout the land who encourage and sustain us with their prayers and solidarity, for as CARA's prayer puts it: 'We come to You as broken members of Your body; Your strength is our strength, Your health is our health and Your being is our being. Grant us Your wisdom in our work, Your love in our pain and Your peace in our hearts.'

David Randall has been pastoral director of CARA since 1988. He is an Anglican priest who worked for 17 years in the East End and Notting Hill Gate areas of London.

For more information about CARA please contact the Project Coordinator, Fr Mike Way, at CARA, 178 Lancaster Road, London W11 1QU (071 792 8299).

## Minister's Letter

Brother Brian,  
Minister General of  
the First Order  
Brothers, writes:



Dear friends,

By the time you read this I will have visited all except one of the houses of the brothers of our Society since I took office on the first of July, 1991. However I have not yet met all the brothers for on my visits one or two have been away. It has also not yet been possible to meet a few individual brothers living and working alone. Nevertheless it is a great privilege to get an overall view of the Society in all three Orders across the world. It gives me great satisfaction to see the contribution which the brothers and sisters of the First Order, the Clares of the Second Order and the brothers and sisters of the fast-growing Third Order make to the life of the Church and the witness of the Kingdom of God.

Furthermore I am fortunate to get a glimpse of so many provinces and dioceses of the Anglican Communion. I have been in the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church of Scotland, the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, the Province of the Church of New Zealand, the Church of Melanesia, the Province of Central Africa, and I live in the Anglican Church of Australia (when I am not travelling). By the end of this year I will also have been to the Diocese of Belize in the

church of the Province of the West Indies. Despite tensions I am very conscious of the family spirit of the Anglican Communion. On a world scale the Communion is small, but it has a very significant contribution to make to the church catholic and Christianity throughout the world.

One of the things which has struck me is the amount of unity which can be achieved when there is a diversity of theological thinking and cultural practice. What seems to unite us is respect for scripture, the ancient creeds, the sacraments and the historic ministry. It was the puritan Richard Baxter who claimed that 'in essential things there should be unity, in unessential things liberality, and in all things charity'. Generally the Anglican Church in all its diversity achieves this. Tensions may be caused when there is a difference of opinion about essentials.

Polarisation can be avoided when people of faith see that things which compromise truth are not always opposites, but through prayerful dialogue complement each other. Thus contemplation and action, clerical and lay ministry, structure and elasticity, community and individual apostolates are held together by the enrichment of the Holy Spirit.

In this broad context the Society of S. Francis endeavours to live out its obedience to the one Lord and its faithfulness to the Gospel in a spirit of truth, charity and holiness. I pray that we may all continue to play our parts in this vocation.

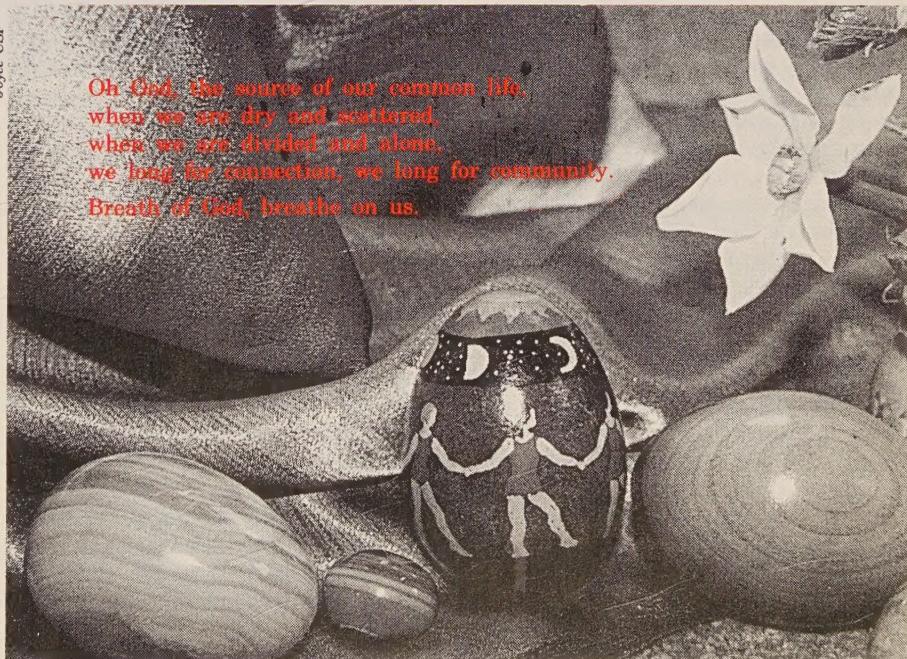
With my love and prayers,

Brian SSF

## A prayer for caring communities

Joyce CSF

Oh God, the source of our common life,  
when we are dry and scattered,  
when we are divided and alone,  
we long for connection, we long for community.  
Breath of God, breathe on us.



Janet Morley, *Bread of Tomorrow*, Christian Aid and SPCK, £6.99

# Living in L'Arche

by Clare Hall-Matthews



L'Arche communities are places where adults with learning disabilities and those whom society calls normal live together, sharing their lives, their work and their leisure. "L'Arche" is French for the Ark, as in Noah's Ark. The first L'Arche community was started by Jean Vanier in 1964 in the village of

Trosly, north of Paris.

At the beginning he simply invited two handicapped men from an institution to come and live with him. He knew that this was an irreversible decision. The idea caught on, and many volunteers came to join him. L'Arche grew and spread - today there are nearly a hundred communities across the world, seven of them in the UK.

L'Arche was founded on the spirit of the beatitudes, 'Blessed are the poor...' Those with learning disabilities are poor in the sense that they are looked down on by society; their families don't always know how to manage or to welcome them, many cannot find work or live in a home of their own. They are poor because of the limitations of their handicap. And yet they are also blessed, they have many gifts which they can share, which they are willing to offer to the rest of us, if only we will listen.

To quote the charter of L'Arche: 'We believe that every person, whether handicapped or not, has a unique and mysterious value. The handicapped person is a complete human being and as such has the rights of every person, the right to life, to care, to education, and to work. We also believe that a person who is wounded in their capacity for autonomy and in their mind is capable of great love which the Spirit of God can call forth, and we believe that God loves that person in a special way because of their very poverty.'

In L'Arche Kent, where I have spent four years, we have 4 houses and 3 work areas. All the people with learning disabilities go out to work during the day. In the garden project we grow vegetables and flowers for drying - the winter work is making dried flower arrangements. In S. Radigund's crafts the main work is weaving, plus candlemaking, cardmaking and beadwork. The Fountain is a therapy project which provides a variety of activities for those who don't fit in to a traditional work structure.

I came to L'Arche from an academic background, having completed my degree. I was looking for something different - I wanted to work on relationships, on the heart, after years of educating the head. I certainly found it. Living closely with others, in a caring and open atmosphere, I learned a lot about myself. I didn't like all of it - I discovered my anger, tension and frustration; I realised there were people I didn't get on with. Sometimes I felt I was pushed to my limits. But still I was accepted and supported. L'Arche has been a place of enormous growth for me.

The way of life seems very normal. We get up and have breakfast, go to work or work in the houses, come home, have supper together, relax in the evenings, go out or go shopping at weekends. But there is a place for everyone, however handicapped - they are included and accepted, enabled to join in.

There is something very simple yet profound in this. Life is very ordinary, full of everyday joys and sorrows. We laugh

gift. When we slow down to their pace, we gain a new perspective on life and learn what really matters. We learn to value relationship and the things of the heart. People are important, not status or success.

When the element of competition is removed and a place is made for each person, there is a place for me too. I was able to open up, and to share my vulnerability. Living with handicapped people I discovered my own handicap, my own brokenness. I was also accepted and loved. I came to L'Arche with little self-confidence, and although I still have a way to go, I gained an enormous amount.

To discover how much I share with those we call handicapped was extremely important. It brings me down to the basics. To affirm the dignity and value of each person, even the most broken - this is something essential, something holy. Each human life has infinite value in itself, irrespective of usefulness or success. I have an image of

Clare Hall-Matthews



Helen, Yvonne and John on pilgrimage

together, we enjoy each other's company. We go through difficult times together, argue, work through problems, share crises. We learn and grow and pray together. In L'Arche the assistants are enabling those with learning disabilities, but it also works the other way round; the people with learning disabilities, in sharing with the assistants, enrich the quality of our lives, teach us to care, enable us to grow. The atmosphere of care extends to everyone - the assistants are supported in their difficulties and weaknesses too.

People with learning difficulties have a lot to teach us. Our society values achievement, success, technology, physical beauty and prowess. Where does that leave those who do not succeed? In L'Arche we learn the unique value of every person, however handicapped; we learn to appreciate their

helping someone, whose body is quite fragile, to have a bath: she is made in the image of God. Humanity is sacred.

There is a great spirit of celebration within L'Arche. We often laugh and have fun together, sharing the joy of ordinary things. Each person's birthday is especially celebrated, and a lot goes into making them feel special and loved. We have a special meal, invite guests, give presents, and give thanks for that person and their gifts in our prayers. Our lives are busy - living and working with so many people is tiring. It is so important for us to be able to relax and celebrate together, affirming the value of each person's life and our life together.

There is also a strong sense of welcome in L'Arche. Each visitor or new person will find a welcome card on their bed. New people are soon helped to feel at home and find

their place. Each individual is valued for what they bring, their own gifts and weaknesses - themselves.

The spiritual side of life is a thread which runs through everything. We sing grace at mealtimes, and begin every meeting with the Lord's Prayer. We pray together frequently. Many people are very involved with local churches. Our monthly community nights usually begin with the Eucharist. L'Arche communities in the UK are ecumenical, with Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants worshipping together. The diversity is enormously enriching. However, we are unable to share the same Eucharist, which is incredibly painful.

In our Pilgrim's Group, residents and assistants share their spiritual journey together. Each evening has a theme, taken from the Bible and related to our own lives. I always find it particularly meaningful. When we put things simply, using images instead of too many words to reach people who are not so verbal, I find that I am also deeply moved. Also, it is in the Pilgrim's Group that I feel most equal with our people. In ordinary life there are always some things I can do which they can't, but when we stand before God we are equal, there is no difference. Sometimes they lead the way. When Jenny approached a plant representing the burning bush from which God spoke, she put her arms around it to give it a hug. Did you ever think of giving God a hug? She did...

We celebrate the major Christian festivals in a special way. Holy Week is very important. On Maundy Thursday we have a ceremony in which we wash each other's feet, and we then share together in a simplified version of the Passover meal, before going to our churches for the Eucharist. On Good Friday we act out the Way of the Cross around the garden, with short mimes and meditations. I have a powerful memory of Jenny playing Veronica, wiping the face of Vincent playing Jesus: her face was so full of concern. She wasn't acting, she was genuinely caring for him.

Once a year we go on pilgrimage together, walking and sharing our spiritual journey. One year I was in a slower group which didn't walk far. I was disappointed as I enjoy walking, but it turned out to be a lovely group. We were thinking about the feeding of the 5000. How the boy had very little, but he offered it to Jesus and that was enough. We thought about what each of us has to offer. We sat in a circle, on top of the Wye Downs with a beautiful view. We went round each person in turn, and the rest of us each named one of their gifts. One man, John, has no speech and is quite disabled; in the world's terms he has little to offer. Yet to those who know him it was so obvious that he has an enormous amount to give. It was the same with each person. Sometimes it seems we have very little and life can be a struggle. But when we look at how much each person has....I had a sense of twelve baskets flowing over, and I felt richly blessed.

## Healing in Nigeria

by Brother David Jardine

**I was a great experience for me to go to Nigeria in November as a member of a SOMA team. SOMA takes its name from the Greek word meaning 'body'. I had never been to Africa before, but had read a lot about the vitality of church life out there. God did not let me down.**

The many services that we attended always lasted at least 3 or 4 hours, but they were never boring. The structure of the liturgy was there, but worship was always conducted with flexibility, spontaneity and a great sense of joy. I believe this sense of joy springs partly from the character of the African people, but also from a deep relationship with God, a relationship which they allow to affect every aspect of life.

For instance, as a team we were offered hospitality in a number of homes during our three weeks in Nigeria. Some of those we visited were important people. One of them was a chief who at one time had been number five in the Nigerian government. Another was a member of the House of Chiefs, the equivalent of the House of Lords over here. But whatever home we went to they always liked to get the whole household together before we left, family and servants, so that we could pray for them, sick members of the family first and then the whole group.

Just opposite where we were staying was a small hospital. We went to visit there one day and we noticed a list of instructions for patients in the waiting room. It was the final instruction which was the most important - 'as well as receiving medical treatment, pray to God for your own healing. We can treat you but only God can heal you.'

We may be technologically far more advanced over here than they are, but they seem to have a much better understanding of the relationship between faith and medical treatment. Certainly when they came for prayer in our healing services they really seemed to believe that God was going to heal them. During the three weeks that we spent in Nigeria we must have prayed for at least 6000 people. Possibly two thirds of that number were suffering from less serious illnesses - pains in the head, chest, stomach, waist and joints. Many of these pains were malaria related. When we prayed at least seventy-five per cent of those people were healed instantaneously, or almost instantaneously.

The really serious illnesses, such as total blindness or total deafness, were much more difficult. But people who were partially blind or partially deaf, most of them made significant improvement and some of them were completely healed. The interesting thing is that we minister in Ireland in the same way that we minister in Nigeria, but we do not achieve the same results. And that raises the question why? I believe



that the reason is because you have an atmosphere of faith out there. People take it for granted that God answers prayer, and when God finds that kind of faith then his power can be released.

In Nigeria belief in evil spirits is strong, and with good reason. Many people, as well as being baptised, were also dedicated to water spirits. This has left them with real problems, so the deliverance ministry is very necessary. We prayed for many who needed to be set free in this way. One woman in the Presbyterian Church in Calabar started to shake, then to shriek and finally to wave her arms about. We ministered to her and after a short time a sense of peace came over her; she relaxed flat out on the floor. When she got up she seemed to be perfectly alright and went back to her seat. Not every case was as straightforward as this. At least two people received prayer for a couple of hours, and even then, the job was not complete. They had to be asked to come back on another occasion.

On the SOMA team we felt that back in Ireland there is a great need for this deliverance ministry as well. I am not just referring to the growing involvement in the occult here, but also to the spirit of prejudice and bigotry, the spirit of fear and religion from which so many of us need to be set free. So often in Ireland we seem to be held prisoner by attitudes from which we cannot escape ourselves. Maybe the ministry of deliverance could have a real contribution to make here.

Nigeria in November 1991 will remain with me for a long time: the wonderful hospitality, the faith of the people, the instantaneous healings, the joy in worship. I knew that for me it was going to be a life-changing experience and I feel that what God took me to Africa to learn was how important it is for the Church, and for each of us as individuals, to be renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

An American clergyman visiting Calabar at the same time said - 'When you look at the Church in Nigeria today you are looking at the Anglican Church of the future.' I sincerely hope that this is true, because they have so much to teach us in Ireland.

# Acton Homeless Concern

by Annette Figueiredo

'From the outside it may seem only a din, a clatter of dishes, pans, a thick cloud of smoke, a drone of voices, but from within it has its own unique calmness, serenity, acceptance and friendship.'



The vision for Emmaus House (Acton Homeless Concern) was suggested five years ago by the priests of the Sacred Heart Community based in Acton, West London. Fr Padraig Lyons and Fr Pat Lynch became increasingly alarmed and concerned about the numbers of homeless and disadvantaged people calling at the presbytery for money, food, clothes, or just 'to have a chat with Father'. One person in particular, Philip by name, moved the priests into action.

Philip had been homeless for over twenty years and was living on the presbytery steps and at the back of Our Lady of Lourdes church in Acton. In other words he became a permanent and visible reminder to the parish community of the plight of the marginalised and homeless.

In the words of Fr Lyons, 'I believe we have to make an option for this preferential option for the poor, if we are to live with the gospel or be part of bringing about God's reign. There has been a particular emphasis in the community on not just preaching for the poor but, in whatever way we can, being involved with them. That has caused changes and tensions, but it has also brought about a sense of new life and new spirit in the community in the last few years.'

The vision itself was not sufficient, however, and implementing a concern for justice took the collective efforts of the whole parish community. So how did the above vision come to be transformed into what is now often referred to as a 'caring community'?

Care for the vulnerable was already visible and high on the agenda of the parish community - care for the sick, elderly, lonely, housebound, disabled etc, but somehow this care needed to be extended to the homeless - very much part of the Church and wider community.

The drive and motivation for this had to come from the priests, and they therefore began to draw parallels between gospel values and care for the homeless. This was not an easy ride. People often have this image that homeless people are all alcoholics, down and outs, and simply not worth bothering about. In some ways that is understandable - the portrayal of homeless people in the media serves to heighten rather than allay fears and ideas like this.

A small group of parishioners empathised with the following statement made by one parishioner: 'Father, you're lowering the standards of the church around here with all these scruffy people hanging around'. Even though it was only a small group, the priests were prepared to take the risk and to rise up to the challenge. In the parish they called it 'raising awareness'. The real work of this was done by parish-

ioners who were already active in Emmaus House. Their experience of caring for homeless people and how working with them had changed their own attitudes, encouraged them to raise awareness and educate the uninvolved, the fearful and mistrusting. As one volunteer puts it: 'I now see the homeless with new eyes - see their dignity. I don't pass them by on the streets any more. I speak to them as friends. I pass no judgment. I come out from Thursday's work feeling fulfilled. It has taught me not to discriminate. We are all one people together.'



Emmaus House, Acton

Annette Figueiredo and Fr Padraig Lyons with a client at Emmaus House

From the difficulty of coming face to face with people who have problems, to finding a way to help, care and accompany, the House carries on its work with the dignity and respect that it was created for. This basic and fundamental ethos has been an important catalyst for all that goes on in the House. In addition to providing the basic necessities such as food, clothing, showers, haircuts, there is also an advice/advocacy service available, as well as counselling and medical facilities. There is also a women's day each Wednesday.

The volunteers are an important feature of care for the homeless in the House. They set up tables, shop, cook, clean up, organise the stores, wash up and produce a mouth-watering and substantial meal, as well as a welcoming space for people coming into the House. Other volunteers are involved in sorting, measuring and giving out clothes. Yet others are involved in cutting hair, driving, typing, administrative and reception work, and counselling. By offering practi-

cal help on a voluntary basis they serve to be instruments of care and love. The House is managed on a daily basis by two members of staff, and on an overall basis by a management committee who are all volunteers too.

What makes Emmaus House appealing to the homeless is the recognition that homelessness is not just about housing, it is also about access to health, benefits, education, relationships, and it is associated with lack of identity, dependency on drink, drugs, crime, debt and domestic violence. Homelessness affects a person's general well-being. It is about the pressures that are forced upon a person in his/her efforts to survive; the allegiance to some group if a person is to feel secure; and the feeling of being social outcasts which they often experience.

Emmaus House seeks to care for homeless people in their everyday struggle and tries to alleviate the suffering of the homeless by the care, concern, love and practical help which is offered. Emmaus House also receives in return love and friendship. This dual relationship of giving and receiving is what makes it such a caring community.

'The two of us girls,' one visitor said recently, 'have suffered from domestic violence. I am 18 years of age. My friend is 19. Both of us are squatting. We can't get a place to stay. Even though we are over 18 we feel very vulnerable without secure accommodation. We have not enough money to live on so the meals are a great help.'

Just as Jesus revealed himself to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, so too does he reveal himself through all those who journey to Emmaus House - both the carers and those cared for.

Annette Figueiredo is an advocacy and support worker at Emmaus House which is run by Acton Homeless Concern.

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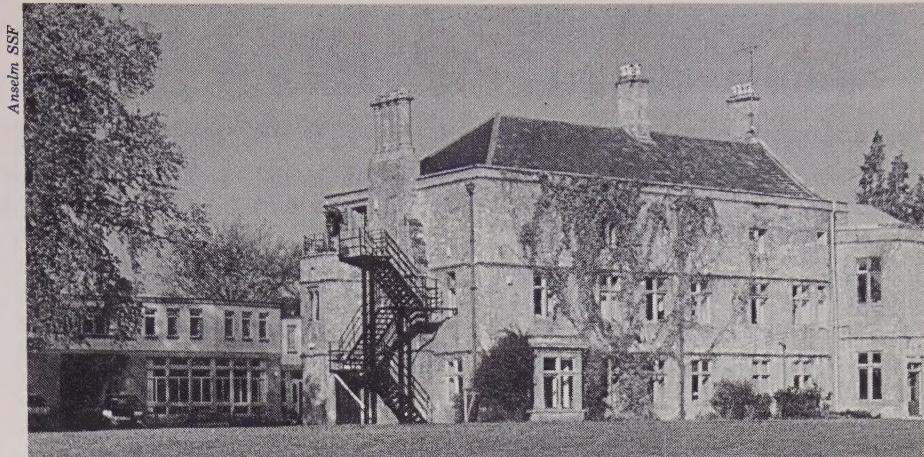
# S. Francis School

by Brother Anselm

By some standards, forty years isn't a long time for the life of a school; but it does mean that people who belonged to it at all stages of its existence can meet together on the same day.

Such a day was Saturday, 20th June when such a gathering took place at S. Francis School for Boys, Hooke - and while nothing could relieve the very real sense of loss and sorrow caused by the fact of the school's closure, the day had about it something of the nature of a celebration. Somebody said that it was like having a wedding and a funeral at the same time.

At the end of the Eucharist there were short speeches. Should one clap at the end of a speech in a service? Nobody was sure about that, until Chris Wright who joined the school as a nine-year-old in 1949 spoke about what had happened to him as a result - about feeling, for the first time, accepted and set free, and of value - 'Even when I broke the axle of the tractor by driving into a gatepost'. In telling us that little story Chris was telling us a great deal about what



it was that we were thanking God for, he had really put his finger on it. What was Father Owen's secret? It was about giving the boys the feeling that they mattered, and that they could be trusted with tractors and gateposts - and that even when the tractor, or the gatepost, or both, suffered as a result, they still had the feeling that they mattered and that they could be trusted. When Chris put his notes back into his pocket, we found that our inhibitions had vanished, and we all clapped unrestrainedly.

Nobody has found a way for taking leave of around 200 people individually, mean-

ingly - and simultaneously. When it's time to go all you can do is smile at those nearest to you, and slip quietly away - very conscious of the fact that there will be no more Open Days, that you can't think to yourself 'Oh well, there's always next time, I'll say it then' - but with a stronger awareness of the very powerful significance of Hooke for anyone who was a part of it and of the permanence of Hooke for us, and of Hooke as something we can in a sense share with others - even though the swimming pool is empty and the place is up for sale.

**During April and June 1991 I was delving into the origins of Franciscanism in the Anglican Communion. This was quite fascinating and I was able to use the very fine Franciscan library collected by the late Dr. J.R.H. Moorman (one time Bishop of Ripon) now housed at S. Deiniol's Library in North Wales.**

At the invitation of Dr. Peter Jagger, the Warden and Chief Librarian, I returned for a third visit for the specific purpose of arranging and listing a large collection of Dr. Moorman's research notes. Before I tell you something about these invaluable research notes I would like to describe briefly the remarkable Franciscan library which Dr. Moorman collected over a period of sixty years. It is very much a library to assist scholarly research into Franciscan history.

There are a number of Incunabula and a good number of 16th, 17th, and 18th century books. The library indeed reflects the prodigious output of Franciscana since 1227. There are books about S. Francis - the early material which includes S. Francis' own writings, the early lives of Celano and S. Bonaventura, the Legend of the Three Companions, the Mirror of Perfection and the Little Flowers. Then there are the later works: Bartholomew of Pisa, *Liber de Conformatitate*, 1399.

There are also histories of the Order and these show that as the intellectual growth of the Order developed, so did its scholarship. The medieval schoolmen and many of the greatest scholars of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries were Franciscans, men like Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, Alexander of Hales

## Research resources

by Brother Hubert

and William Ockham. In the library are two 15th century manuscripts of the writings of S. Bonaventura, also a printed edition published in Brescia in 1497 and other early editions. The library contains the *Opera Omnia* in 15 volumes published in Paris, 1864. Another Incunabulum is Umbertino de Casale's *Vitae Crucifixae* printed in Venice in 1485. There is a papal bull of Pope Gregory XI, issued on 28th July 1373. It is a bull of Indulgence granted to six Franciscan friars of Scarzole, in the diocese of Orvieto. It is in good condition with a fine impression of leaden bulla attached by yellow and pink silk cords.

The great interest in Francis and Franciscan studies was aroused by the publication of Sabatier's *Vie de S. Francois* and this book opened the floodgates. Over sixty lives of S. Francis were published in English alone and twenty-one studies, plays and anthologies. This interest was greatly enhanced in 1926, the seventh centenary of the death of S. Francis. This interest has continued to the present day and Franciscan research includes all aspects of the history of the Order.

I would like to end with a word about the collection of research notes. A handlist, which I compiled along with a Bibliography of the Library is due to be

published. There are twelve large boxes of these notes and as one studies them one is impressed by Dr. Moorman's careful and detailed research and these notes will be invaluable to the serious scholar.

There are lists of General Chapters from 1210 - 1517, detailed notes on papal bulls relating to the Franciscan Orders, lists of Provincial Ministers, of custodies and many bibliographical notes covering the whole range of Franciscan studies, notes from episcopal registers, intimate notes about the friars' daily life in the Middle Ages. There are notes on early chroniclers and lists of statutes with references to printed material. You will find notes on the more obscure aspects of Franciscan history. There is information about the missions to the Far East, America, Africa and the Holy Land, about the friars and the Crusades and friars and the Inquisition. There is much information about Franciscan preaching, poetry and art.

Readers will know that Dr. Moorman set up a scholarship to finance the use of his collection at S. Deiniol's Library for the study of S. Francis or the Order, and in the event of there being no suitable applicants to study these areas, for the study of church history. The Scholarships will cover the entire cost of residence for one or more successful applicants annually, and for periods from several weeks to several months.

*Those who are interested in making application about the Scholarship should write directly to the Revd. P.J. Jagger, Warden of S. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, Deeside, Clwyd, CH5 3DF.*

# Belfast Story

*As part of our continuing series of reports from individual houses the brothers in Belfast report :*

**The Society of S. Francis is now firmly established in Belfast. There have been Companions here since the 1950s and the First Order arrived in 1973, living for four years on the Shankill Road before moving to our present house at Deer Park Road in North Belfast.**

The first Guardian was Kevin (1973-1980), followed by Damian (1980-1988) and then David Jardine took over in 1988. Probably more than twenty brothers have served here during the years that we have been in Belfast. Sisters also served from 1983 until 1991, but sadly had to leave because of lack of numbers.

Since 1973 we have had to work in Belfast in the midst of much community and political turmoil and violence. At one level this atmosphere unquestionably makes our work more difficult. But, on the other hand, there are many compensations. People in Northern Ireland are friendly and very kind on the personal level. The friary is literally showered with gifts by those who come to visit us. Church-going in Ireland is much stronger than people in England would be accustomed to. So is family life. Educational standards are high. Personal morality is still taken seriously by a good percentage of people.



*Brs Hubert and Vincent met Princess Anne at the Missions to Seamen in May 1992*

This is reflected in the crime figures, for the level of ordinary crime in Northern Ireland has always been the lowest in the United Kingdom. Indeed at this moment in time the number of people in prison in Northern Ireland per million of population (including those for political offences) is only marginally higher than the number in England. In spite of the image that Belfast has, you are certainly safer walking about this city than most other large cities in the United Kingdom.

Yet, having said that, there is still a major problem to be solved in Northern Ireland. Acts of terrorism are still far too common. There is much suspicion, mistrust and prejudice. Political talks between politicians of

various parties, we hope, are going to bear fruit.

In the midst of all this activity the Society of S. Francis has helped to organise much prayer for Northern Ireland, most of it inside the Province but some outside as well. We believe that this volume of prayer in the background will ultimately play a major contribution in bringing a lasting peace and reconciliation to our land.

Of course, during the last twenty years Franciscan brothers have been involved in many other forms of ministry as well. At this moment we work in parishes, Missions to Seamen, the healing ministry and reconciliation groups. But we have also been involved in prison work, hospital chaplaincy, hospice chaplaincy and a variety of secular jobs.

Because of our common vows we relate particularly well to Roman Catholic religious communities, but we maintain contact with people of all denominations. We

the prophet Isaiah when 'the sound of violence shall be heard no longer in your land nor ruin and devastation within your borders.'



*Br Paul and Princess Anne*

## Belfast brothers

**David Jardine** is Guardian of the Friary. He is a Northern Irishman, a priest of the Church of Ireland, and his main work is the Church's Ministry of Healing.

**Hubert** has been in Belfast for sixteen years and works in a parish on the Shankill Road. He is also involved in various reconciliation groups.

**Vincent** has been in Belfast for three years, but is shortly moving to Hilfield. He also works in a parish on the Shankill Road and is involved with reconciliation groups. He is the brother with responsibility for relating to Companions and Third Order.

**Paul** has been two and a half years in Belfast and worked at one stage in the Young Offenders' Centre. His main work now is as an Assistant Chaplain to the Missions to Seamen.

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# Victim Support



young men, not, as the public so often imagines, women and the elderly.

Volunteers need to be adaptable, for they never know quite what they are going to encounter on a visit or phone call. (I once called on a very elderly single woman, living among quantities of carrier bags and a burglar alarm of piled tin cans - which hadn't gone off! - who concluded that the only item missing was the packet of Durex she always kept on the television set.) But often a case is far more complex than it at first appears, for a crime does not occur in isolation but in the context of a person's whole life and current situation, requiring a client-centred and holistic approach.

The consequences of a crime may be exacerbated by all manner of other problems in a person's life, or have come as the last straw in a series of other disasters, so that what could be an annoying inconvenience to one person can be a major trauma for another, and needs to be responded to as such. A fit and confident person may be more thrown by their self-sufficiency being overturned than a frail, elderly person who has weathered numerous hardships and come to terms with the limitations of old age.

Every victim is unique, but there are common reactions which frequently occur following a crime and which the volunteer comes to recognise as typical - symptoms of shock and anxiety, feelings of anger, loss, violation and depression, fear of going out and suspicion of strangers, to name but some. Friends and colleagues may expect the victim to recover quite quickly and this may be the victim's expectation too. When this is not so victims may feel bewildered by their behaviour and anxious that they are over-reacting or will never be the same again. The volunteer is able to reassure the victim that, though painful, their reactions are normal and will lessen in due course, and gives the victim 'permission' to feel what he or she is feeling. Gradually the victim works through the stages of regaining confidence.

Practical assistance can range from helping to replace a pensioner's buspass to struggling with council departments where rehousing is felt to be essential to recovery. Volunteers will also accompany victims through police station and court room procedures if required. For the majority of people suffering crimes 'Victim Support' is the only support freely available. A volunteer from the local community has the advantage of coming alongside as simply an ordinary, caring human being, with time to listen, rather than as an official caseworker.

For the volunteer it is an opportunity to minister directly to one's neighbours in time of need; to share in their courage and humour as well as their pain; to experience both frustration and affirmation in one's endeavours; to glimpse a fascinating cross-section of the extraordinary diversity of people's lives; and to gain an everwidening perception of God's family as He suffers with us, loves us, and heals us.

by Sister Helen

**Have you ever arrived home and found that burglars have been inside? Have you ever had your bag snatched in the street, or your wallet demanded at knife-point? Have you, perhaps, suffered the violence of physical or sexual assault?**

We know, logically, that we are as much at risk as anyone else, but most of the time we get by believing that 'it won't happen to me'. Along with a little precautionary common sense, that's not an unhealthy attitude - we have a right to walk in the streets or sit in our homes without the burden of paranoid fears, suspecting every passerby of being out to mug us, every rattling window frame of heralding an intruder. However our normal unpreparedness may make the shock all the greater when something does occur. Suddenly the world seems very dangerous and hostile. Suddenly we are made to confront our own vulnerability, even our own mortality.

It is at this point that the organisation 'Victim Support' may be able to help. This is a charity operating through groups of volunteers, covering most of the country, whose purpose it is to offer sympathetic support and practical assistance to victims of crime, as quickly as possible and for as long as necessary.

Volunteers, who provide the bulk of the workforce, come from all walks of life, some of them former victims of crime themselves. There is an initial training course for new recruits and an ongoing programme of meetings for all the volunteers. Further training is offered to those willing and suitable to take on cases involving rape and murder.

Lambeth, where I work as a volunteer, is one of the busiest offices in the country, handling close on 12,000 referrals in 1992. This locality has a higher than average incidence of street crime, often involving knives, but, as in most regions, burgled homes account for the greatest number of crimes against individuals. Sadly, many housebreakings are perpetrated against the poorest section of society, on the rundown housing estates, thus compounding people's sense of deprivation and helplessness. On the street the group most at risk is

# We are Anglicans but Egyptians



by Brother Seraphim

**The Anglican Church has been in Egypt now for over a hundred years, and its prayers and liturgies are mostly taken from the English and translated into Arabic. Because of this it is quite hard for Egyptians to understand. Although written in Arabic most of the prayers draw on a culture quite alien to Egyptian Christians.**

Egypt is a country rich in history and culture; it has one of the oldest libraries in the world at Alexandria. From its deserts came a tradition of monasticism that was to influence both East and West. One only has to visit the British Museum to glimpse a fragment of this ancient cultural history.

The Franciscan life has taught me that if we learn from different cultures, how much richer we become. S. Francis, on his visit to Egypt, did not change the culture but both he and the sultan profited from sharing each other's views, honestly and openly.

Some time ago I was asked to help write a Eucharistic liturgy for the Anglican Church in Egypt. In doing so I have tried to enrich it through mixing what I have learnt in England with traditional Egyptian culture, in an attempt to let the Egyptian people understand the Eucharist in their own way.

This liturgy is now finished and on All Saints Day the Bishop of Egypt and the Archdeacon agreed to use it. This is the first new set of prayers to be used in over a hundred years! God works through even small things, and just as he used S. Francis to spread the good news through all the world so now he has used a novice in SSF to write a new liturgy for Egypt.

Everyone has been very supportive and I would like to thank my brothers for their prayers and the Archdeacon of Egypt and Fr Samy for translating it into English. It is only through God's grace that I did it and in this way S. Francis proclaims the good news to the Middle East today.

My friends, if we want to be rich in understanding and to hear God's voice then we must listen to other cultures. Black and white, young and old, woman or man, God works in all and through all, and this is what S. Francis can teach us in 1992.

# Brum Doors

by Brother John Francis

A radio disc jockey once commented on a request from 'Primrose Street, The Meadows', 'It must be a beautiful place to live!' It wasn't: it was a slum.

The Ladywood Estate in Birmingham isn't a slum, but the name doesn't convey the right image either. It's one of hundreds of similar 1960s developments: middle to high rise council flats, bordered by the London to Wolverhampton main line, dual carriageways and the prosperous city centre. There's a large proportion of one-parent families, high unemployment and, until recently, residents felt that the estate had been used by the Housing Department as a dumping ground for 'problem' families.

To serve all this there are two Community Centres, a Social Club (with a racist reputation), five churches, and lots of pubs! To the Church it's an Urban Priority Area, to the City Council a 'Regeneration Area'. In a recent report the Council noted a need to address the 'spiritual poverty'

of the area and the lack of community.

For a number of years one woman had been seeking to do just that. She began to network with others who worked or lived there and shared similar concerns: people who were motivated to value each person as person and not commodity, who wanted to develop a quality of life based on human values, who recognised that those who feel powerless or who live on the margins are the very ones who should define the nature of their community and who sensed that the churches, for all their endeavours, were unable to address these issues effectively.

The group discovered that there were existing communities who had similar aims. They were particularly impressed by the insights gained through the Basic Ecclesial Communities movement in South America, but were aware that many believed that the BEC model wasn't appropriate in our context. Yet as the Ladywood group explored the workings of BECs they realised that much could be assimilated. They saw that a church wasn't something planted in an area, but that it had to grow naturally from the lives of people; and that the way to do this was to listen to their stories and to discover how God was already at work. Thus the idea of

'Doorway' took shape.

The movement invites anyone to take part in a process operating within the community, the development of a grassroots awareness of the presence of the Reign of God. Its centre is now in a flat 'womaned' by two sisters of La Sainte Union. Gradually those involved are becoming known locally and Doorway is being owned by the people. There's no evangelism practised, although evangelisation (making real the Good News in every aspect of our culture for the transformation of humanity and creation) is at the heart of Doorway.

So the second chapter of the story has begun. It's no longer just an idea, but is taking shape in the lives of people. There's a desire to complement the Church's mission, to incarnate the Spirit as it moves through the life of Ladywood. Doorway is a sacred entrance on the margins of the Church which opens straight into the heart of the activity of God. It is a place where dialogue can start and so the great themes of salvation history can be worked out in the lives of people alienated by its traditional proclamation.

Through this new Doorway something more of the Reign of God is emerging into the life of Ladywood.

## Movable feast?

*The feast of S. Thomas the Apostle was moved from 21 December to 3 July.*

How do you feel, Thomas,  
Your day being moved  
From winter solstice  
To high holiday?

Perhaps you rejoice in  
More attention, away from  
The tinselled run-up to  
The Christmas feast  
For me, reflection on  
Faith emerging from doubt,  
The stirring of meaning,  
needs darker symbols.  
Has more to do with  
The almost imperceptible  
Shift of the earth on its axis,  
A flicker of light  
On the shortest Day,  
Than a blaze of certainty  
In midsummer's sun.

ANN LEWIN

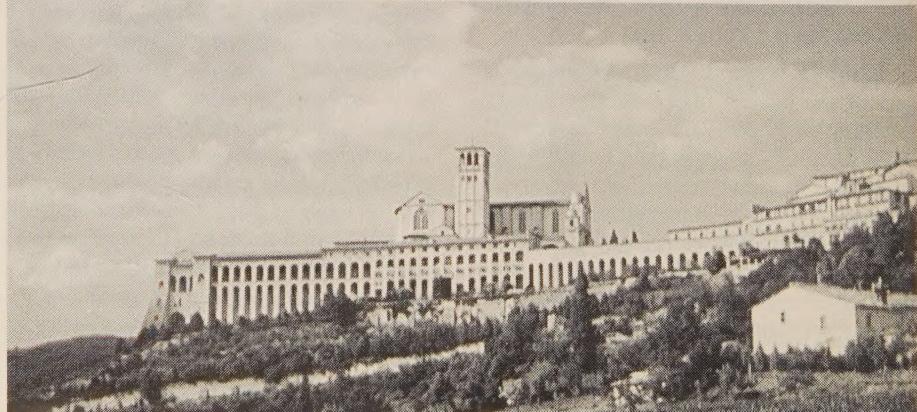
## Saint Francis chooses a brother

Once two young men came to Francis asking to be received into the Order together. Francis, anxious to test their obedience and to find out whether they were really willing to surrender their own wills, took them into the garden and said to them: 'Help me plant some cabbages. Do exactly as you see me doing'.

So Francis began to plant the cabbages with the roots up in the air, and the leaves down under the ground. One of the two young men did as Francis was doing, but the other said: 'That isn't right, Father. You're putting them in upside down!'

Francis turned to him and said: 'My son, just do as you see me doing'. But the young man still insisted on planting the cabbages the right way up. When Francis saw this he said to him: 'Brother, I see that you are very clever; but go away, you won't do for my Order'. So he accepted the one and refused the other.

*The Basilica at Assisi*



David Francis SSF

# Community Routes

## ►► CSF Minister General

Cecilia has recently been re-elected for a period of 4 years as Minister General CSF. When not globetrotting on pastoral visits to sisters in New Zealand and England, she lives in San Francisco. She has spent most of the summer this year in the European Province visiting the sisters' houses. Also she has spent some time with her brother who lives in Berkshire and had a holiday with a Swiss friend. In the autumn she will travel to Auckland for the Ministers' Meetings and will stay on there for a while with the New Zealand sisters.

## ►► Alnmouth at thirty

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the dedication of Alnmouth Friary. The brothers moved into the house in the autumn of 1961 and worked hard at renovation until they were ready to open in the spring of 1962. Our Northern festival (already a fixture) was held at S. Nicholas Cathedral, Newcastle that year.

This year we are back at the Cathedral, and at the time of going to press are looking for a name for the day which expresses clearly that it is open for anyone who would like to come. It is both a celebration of 30 years of Franciscan life in the diocese, and a way of expressing gratitude to our many friends, Companions and Tertiaries in the North East (and in Scotland!) without whom our ministry would be impossible. And it is a way of reaching out to new friends, anyone who feels that the Franciscan slant might throw new light on the gospel for them.

On Saturday October 10 we will gather in Newcastle Cathedral, 11 am to 3.30 pm. During the opening Eucharist, the preacher will be Br Michael, who was the first Guardian of Alnmouth. After sharing packed lunches, Angela Ashwin, author of **Prayer in the Shadows** and **Heaven in Ordinary**, will speak. News around the Society, an exhibition of our life, and enough time for informal chat with friends should be the recipe for an enjoyable day.

## ►► Scunthorpe update

Damian visited Scunthorpe Friary in June and spoke to a group of local Tertiaries and other friends at a 'faith supper'. It was his first opportunity for meeting our local friends since he took office as Minister Provincial, and his visit was greatly appreciated. Martin was away at the time, taking part in a parish mission at S.Wilfrid's, Newcastle.

Gordon is now spending two days each week at the MIND Centre in the town,

Joyce CSF



*The 1992 Novice Conference. Back (l-r): Nolan Tobias, Freda, Simeon Christopher, Matthew, Susan Francis, Brian Edward, Victor (Novice Guardian of the Brothers). Front (l-r): Seraphim, Kate, Jackie, Kentigern John, Jean Te Puna*

including a very intensive training session every Wednesday. The period of training lasts for 6 months; during this time he will be learning not only how to counsel people under stress, but also to help them understand their entitlements, which involves working through the whole complex of relevant legislation and keeping abreast with the many changes which are constantly taking place in this field.

Anselm will be leaving Scunthorpe in October, to take up his new work in Cambridge. He is at present the 'oldest inhabitant' at this friary, having inaugurated the Franciscan presence here, when he arrived with Christopher in January 1984. He will be greatly missed in the locality. During his years as Minister Provincial he was necessarily away a good deal, but he was able to make various links in the town and diocese, in particular with his weekly visits to the nursery class at a nearby school, and his frequent visits to a residential home for the elderly. He has also developed an extensive ministry of spiritual direction, especially to the clergy.

We are grateful, too, to Harry for all his help in the past 3 years and wish him well as he moves to Alnmouth; and we look forward to the arrival of Gregory and Hubert later in the year. The Scunthorpe Friary is ready to move into its next phase, for changes in personnel in a small house usually result in changes of direction.

## ►► Novices conferring

In July the novices of CSF and SSF came together for the 2nd annual novice meeting. The aim was to share and reflect on person-

al experience of community and novitiate.

Three strands came out of the sharing. The first of these was about how we relate to each other within community: is the family the ideal model, and if so how do we achieve this?

The second area was bereavement. It was agreed that we deal with death very well as a community, but how well do we deal with other kinds of bereavement?

In the last area it was noted that community is very supportive of individual ideals, but does this mean that we occasionally lose sight of any kind of common vision?

It was a very positive experience for all involved and this was expressed in a powerful Eucharist at the end of the three days.

## ►► CSF Novice Guardian



Joyce has been appointed Novice Guardian for the European Province, an office which she has held before from 1978-85. She will continue to live in Brixton and will be assisted by Jacqueline and Elizabeth at Compton Durville.

## ►► The Daily Office SSF

The good news is that the new edition will be out in October; the bad news is that it will cost £13.00. Considering that it cost £8.00 seven years ago and that this edition will have considerably more material in it, it is a bargain.

**The Daily Office SSF** will use a subtitle which will be the main title of the more public edition, **Celebrating Common Prayer**. Our edition will have a special Franciscan supplement, containing a range of material germane to followers of Francis, and also our own calendar. The other edition will have a simpler method of celebrating the Office and its own calendar. Otherwise, the books will contain exactly the same material, so please don't buy one title assuming it to be a completely different book from the other title: if you do, you will be miffed.

On 24 October Br Tristam and other members of the Liturgical Commission will lead a day at Hilfield to introduce the new book, copies of which will be on sale. The day will start at 10.00 and finish by 4.00. Please bring your own lunch.

**Celebrating Common Prayer** will be available in most bookshops, priced £12.99, whereas ours will cost £13.00 (plus £2.00 p & p) and only be available either from an SSF shop in a community house or directly from: Douglas Carpenter, 47 Crest Road, South Croydon, London CR2 7JR (phone 081 657 3666).

## ►► Hilfield changes

Hilfield has always been used to a transient population but these past twelve months have probably seen more changes than any other period of its history. Three brothers, Kenneth, Barnabas and Patrick have died, as have, more recently, two longterm residents, Paul Simpson and Sidney Goodier. Allan Wippell, very much part of the Friary for over 50 years, is now in Davidson House, a nearby nursing home, and Martin Sharp, who has been around for nearly as long, is seriously ill in hospital.

There has been a change of Guardian from Victor to Samuel, and two brothers, Credan and James, have moved to other houses. On the other side of the balance sheet Malcolm, Philip Bartholomew and Vincent have arrived, but the fact that the group of 8 novices who move in mid-September will be replaced by only 3 aspirants means that there will be significantly fewer brothers living at the Friary in the coming year.

All this leaves the community feeling somewhat bereft and unsettled, but there's a confidence that God is saying something through all this upheaval. Clearly, our pattern of life needs to be adapted to our fewer resources and we can't fulfil as many commitments as we've had in the past; but whatever else changes we know that we continue to be called to a strong community life centred in the chapel and in the common task of serving others.



Sister Jacqueline with Sister Cecilia.  
Jacqueline made her life Profession at Compton Durville on 18 July 1992.

## ►► Telling the Good News together

Back in May, an event took place in Beeston and Cottingley (Leeds) called 'Open Door'. It was a coming together of local Methodists, Roman Catholics and Anglicans in a mission to their congregations and to the area, and was the culmination of two years preparation by clergy, committee and the leader (Anselm) appointed by SSF to whom the approach had been made.

The mission team of 6 Anglicans (all from religious communities), 6 young Methodists from another part of the city, and 6 Roman Catholics (a Franciscan friar and members of the Sion Community, a secular institute dedicated to evangelisation) were heard preaching in each other's churches, helped together at a community picnic, went visiting across denominational boundaries, studied scripture together, above all, prayed together. The hope was that a united witness of this kind would encourage the local congregations in their mission to the area, and that local people would see the churches working together for them.

## ►► Assisi meeting

Brs David Francis and John Nicholas attended a conference of post novitiate 'Young Religious of the Franciscan Families' at Assisi in July. The theme of the meeting was 'New evangelisation: criteria and the way of Franciscanism'. The discussions and reflections centred on Franciscan fraternity as a witness to the gospel and our commitment and conversion to the Franciscan virtues of joy, openness and the message of the Cross, as individuals and as community. 'It was a great experience to be in the city of Francis,' they say, 'and to have an opportunity to share fully in the liturgy and worship, as well as to exchange and share in so many different experiences of the Franciscan life. Pax et Bonum was the overriding feeling of the week or, as the Italians say, Pace e Bene.'

## ►► Edinburgh extends

Not only is the number of tourists increasing, but also the number of homeless people. This unconcealed problem has motivated some to help reduce the escalation by looking for ways of renovating accommodation and providing a home for those in need. Br Basil and the Rock Trust have acquired property and are now in the throes of refurbishing. It is hoped that they will accommodate a selection of young, single, homeless men soon. The Friary still serves tea and sandwiches to those who come between 9-10 in the morning. During the day others come too, sometimes just for tea or to sit and talk. Various churches have very kindly donated tins of food which we pass on to those who come to our door.

Both Bill and Basil continue their work at 'The Ark' which is a place used to provide cooked breakfasts for those on the streets. David Francis has just been appointed Episcopal chaplain at Saughton Prison and combines this with his duties as a district nurse. Timothy looks after the flat and deals with those who call, alongside Bill and David. He helps in various churches when the need arises. Both he, David and Bill work a few hours each week as volunteers at a Christian bookshop, which helps to make us a little more noticeable in Edinburgh.

Two bits of recent news: the first is that the lease on the flat has been extended for a further 5 years. The brothers are delighted by this and hope to look closely how they can develop their ministry now and into the future. Also it has just been announced that our bishop, Richard Holloway, has been elected Primus of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. We are very pleased for him and grateful for all the support he gives us.

## ►► Brother Michael

'As honorary assistant bishop in the diocese of Ely, a role usually associated with retired bishops,' writes Br Michael from Cambridge, 'I am frequently asked if I am "enjoying retirement". I try to explain that there is no such thing for Religious, but the questioner is rarely convinced, particularly if they have added "at your age"! In fact, an increasing amount of time is given to assisting the diocesan bishop, Stephen Sykes, by taking confirmations all over the very widespread, rural diocese, with long drives across the Fens to remote, windswept villages. I also find myself preaching for parish festivals, harvests, special services in the Cathedral and, in the past few years, taking retreats at Saint Francis, Hemingford Gray and Bishop Woodford House. It has also been good to pick up again my association with the University, where colleges invite me for confirmations, talks, etc. The little house we live in is right in the centre of Cambridge and very convenient for clergy, laity, students who come for counselling, spiritual direction and advice, or just for a meal.'



Brothers, novices, postulants and aspirants at Hautambu Friary in the Solomon Islands. The new Friary at Kira Kira, which the brothers built themselves, was blessed on 29 June this year.

'I am hoping in the future to go away from Cambridge rather less than in the past. We look forward to Br Anselm coming as the new priest in charge of Saint Bene't's and we all will want to support him in that role while, at the same time, affirming Saint Francis House as a Friary, the only religious house for men in the diocese, and a place where all may be welcome. Certainly, the house is being heavily used and not least by the stream of wayfarers who come each day.'

'I am hoping in the future to find more time to associate myself with those brothers involved in the AIDS ministry, to attend lectures in the U3A (University of the Third Age) and do more painting!'

## ►► Compton Open Day

There were five workshops following the pattern of recent years: art, music, clowning, liturgical dance, Bible study, led by our kind and very expert friends and by our local (sister) clown. The event started with lunch indoors because of the rain, but the day then became steadily drier and the crowds grew. At one o'clock all gathered in Chapel where our invited celebrant, Bishop John Waller, introduced the theme of 'bread' and sent out the workshops with the first prayer of the Eucharist. Having then gathered their contributions in an hour and a half's practice and work, each group presented one element of the service: confession, intercession, ministry of the Word, and the Peace, all acted out with enthusiasm and great reverence. The Eucharist finished with Bishop John leading a dance of thanksgiving. It was a very moving occasion and greatly enjoyed by all present.

## ►► American Angst

After much deliberation and prayer, and with great sadness, the CSF American Provincial Chapter have made the difficult decision to close their house in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The house was opened in 1989 and its closing is one of the conse-

quences of four sisters withdrawing from the community in the last two years. Those in residence there expect to return to S. Francis House, San Francisco at the end of October.

Thanks to an article in the *San Francisco Examiner* newspaper in April, some of the constant financial angst of Family Link was relieved for a wee while: \$42,500 was raised. In reality, that's just a few months operating costs. Ruth co-founded Family Link with Ray Cope in 1986, a small charitable organisation providing a home away from home for people who go to San Francisco to visit relatives dying of AIDS. She exercises a variety of roles in the course of her work: counsellor, confessor, chauffeur, interpreter, mediator, reconciler, health educator and a shoulder to cry on. The existence of Family Link can mean the difference between an unrelenting, lonely nightmare and an experience of love and compassion.

## ►► Paul Simpson

Paul Simpson, who died at the age of 51, had lived at Hilfield for 36 years. Brothers come and go (mostly go, Br Patrick used to say), but Paul has been one of the fixed points for brothers and visitors all that time.

We always got a welcome from Paul - anything from 'Hiya bruv' and a squeeze of the hand, to the disarmingly incredulous 'What are you doing here?' You might even be invited to watch his TV after compline, '...as long as it doesn't get you into trouble with the Guardian.'

He certainly saw a lot of changes, or 'put up with changes' would be nearer the truth, for Paul was innately conservative. 'Whatever are you going to get up to next?', or 'I don't know what things are coming to', or even (with a hand on your arm) 'You can't be serious!' as the brothers changed the chapel, the refectory or the timetable yet again.

'We give thanks for Paul,' Br Samuel said at his funeral, 'because he has been for us a pointer towards the Kingdom of God. I

say that not because Paul always managed to start reciting the Lord's Prayer at least three-quarters of a breath before anyone else, but because he has been a living reminder to us that the way into the Kingdom is not through the corridors of power or worldly success, but rather that the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the humble and meek are the truly blessed ones in God's reality. We give thanks to his family for letting Paul live with us all these years, and with them we give thanks to God for the gift of Paul. And we give thanks to Paul himself - because our fellowship in Christ, the fellowship of the baptised, is not broken but is made even stronger through death.'

## ►► Fr Sidney Goodier

Fr Sid died at Hilfield on July 29 at the age of 74, having lived the last 20 years of his life at the Friary. He had been steeped in the Anglo-Catholic tradition since his childhood days in the now defunct Choir School of All Saints Margaret St., and then through his training for the priesthood at Kelham. Br Philip Bartholomew said at his funeral: 'The core of Sid's life was to get it right with God. Knowing that he was a sinner and that God's redeeming love and forgiveness was not a matter of being good and good works alone, but a matter of faith, trust, hope and a fidelity with God and people.'

'We pray for his beloved wife Jeannie, their daughters Clare, Bridget and Jane and their families (the grandchildren he adored), his family and many lifelong friends. We rejoice with them and we mourn with them in their and our loss of Sid; Fr Sid, the priest with the roguish sense of humour and a great love of people, a good Catholic with a deep love for the Lord, a friend and a friendship maker'.

## ►► Round-up

**Pat** has moved to Brixton... **Freda** has moved to Birmingham... **Christine** to Newcastle-under-Lyme... **Angela** has moved to Compton Durville... **Chris** and **Christine** made their First Professions at N-U-L on July 1st... **Gwenfryd Mary** celebrated 25 years in profession in July... **Susan Edward** was admitted as a postulant in May... **Helen** has gone on leave of absence... **Denise** has withdrawn from the novitiate... **Seraphim** spent four months at Alnmouth before moving to Liverpool... **Nolan Tobias** arrives at Alnmouth in September... **Austin** returned to Alnmouth in July having successfully completed his Diploma in Franciscan Studies at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury... **Masseo** moved to Alnmouth from Hooke in July... **Vincent** moves from Belfast to Hilfield in September... **John** has moved from Alnmouth to Glasshampton... **Douglas John** is on leave of absence...

# Reviews

**Jeffrey John (Ed), introduced by Richard Holloway, Living Tradition: Affirming Catholicism in the Anglican Church, Darton, Longman and Todd, £6.95.**

The cover design of this symposium reproduces a 'Noli me Tangere' from the National Gallery in London, and Richard Holloway's reference to the words of the risen Christ give us a clue to the central message of the book. On page 126 we read:

'Mary...had to learn a painful but liberating lesson. The divine is not to be bolted and padlocked by any of us to any particular thing so that when we lose it we lose God. That is to make finite things into God. We are not even allowed to cling to the earthly body of Jesus....The discomforting news that Jesus proclaimed was that the divine spirit cannot be buried in a particular tradition or system. It is forever breaking out of the prisons in which we try to contain it, bursting out of the categories in which we entomb it.'

The authors of the papers delivered at the 'Affirming Catholicism' conference at York last summer and here available as a very readable book, seek to apply the message of catholicism among Anglicans - and do so in a recognisably Anglican style by adopting an ambiguous title. They affirm catholicism, and they seek a catholicism which affirms.

Archbishop Carey gives us an unambiguous affirmation of that movement in our church outside which he himself grew up, and is followed by Rowan Williams, Jeffrey John, Alan Billings, Jack Dominian, Mother Allyne CSMV, and Richard Holloway who, in realms doctrinal, scriptural, sociological, psychological, monastic and encyclopaedic respectively, seek the catholicism which affirms. Archbishop Habgood recalls us, without wasting words, to Christ, in his closing sermon.

Here is much that is excellent - and therein lies a weakness. Catholicism is about universality, and a message which can only be heard by the sophisticated is not a universal message. Jesus used no long words - for example, he said 'Touch me not'.

ANSELM SSF

**Ian Ker, The Achievement of John Henry Newman, Harper Collins, £6.95.**

This work by Ian Ker should have a wide appeal. It serves as a useful primer for the inquiring general reader unfamiliar with Newman. To those more acquainted with Newman's thought it offers new and interesting comment and analysis. Its style is highly accessible, mediating Newman to the present day reader, taking aspects of Newman's subtle and complex character chapter by chapter as Educator, Philosopher, Preacher, Theologian and Writer.

Most exciting is Ker's treatment of Newman as Philosopher, regarding him as more than simply an apologist for Christianity but as furthering an original theory of knowledge, an originality which is only now beginning to be recognised. Newman's treatment of imagination displays affinities with Coleridge and the influence of Romanticism but less credited is the influence of an empiricism that he is trying to escape. Imagination leads not into an inner world of introspection but towards an outer world of reality. The 'real' involves a wider concept of the human mind than that assumed by empiricism, nevertheless what enables apprehension and assent to the 'real' is precisely the empirical factor of experience.

For someone who eventually finds his home in the Roman Catholic Church due to his fundamental convictions as to the nature of both Apostolicity and Authority, one might be surprised how deeply 'personalist' is his thought, so intense that it reminds one of Kierkegaard and existentialism.

Most extraordinary is Newman's treatment of doubt, anticipating Wittgenstein's radical critique of universal scepticism. 'I am what I am, or I am nothing. I cannot think, reflect or judge, without starting from the very point at which I am concluding. My ideas are all assumptions, and I am ever moving in a circle. I cannot avoid being sufficient for myself, for I cannot make myself anything else and to change me is to destroy me'. The subtlety conveyed here in Newman's epistemological thought moves us beyond both the Scholastic and the empiricist tradition.

This short work should act as a stimulus to reading Ker's much longer and excellent recently published biography of Newman and even more so to Newman's own writings.

JOHN NICHOLAS SSF

**Robin Gill, Christian Ethics in Secular Worlds, T&T Clark, £6.95.**

From January this year the author of this book became the first Michael Ramsey Professor in the University of Kent at Canterbury. Trained both as a sociologist and a theologian, he is alert to the fast-changing dilemmas of society and sensitive to the variety of theological viewpoints. He points up the problem of acquiring sufficient expertise to speak sensibly about Christian ethics.

The growth of modern bio-technology, the economics of the business world, technological issues in nuclear energy, fast-changing medical and sociological theories about AIDS, and so on, require detailed understanding rather than superficial pronouncements. He shows

great skill in handling these issues and gives a model for dialogue in his description in chapter 8 of an interdisciplinary study group on social policy for those with HIV and AIDS. His knowledge is matched by a reader-friendly style, sharp and easily accessible.

Two previous books, **Beyond Decline** (1988), which argues that Britain may be less secularised than on first appearance, and **Competing Convictions** (1989) which begins the search for new church structures, bode well for the book promised for this year **The Myth of the Empty Church** (SPCK). He also promises a new series entitled **New Studies in Christian Ethics** (CUP) to the value of which this smaller book points.

BERNARD SSF

**Esther de Waal, A World Made Whole: Rediscovering the Celtic tradition, Fount 1991, £5.99.**

The Celtic way is through experience. It sees the world not only in cerebral terms but, like poetry, as speaking to the heart and remaining elusive. Although we may identify much through our own involvement, we remain on the edge, grateful to glimpse some of the mysteries and touch them reverently, while acknowledging their unique difference.

Esther de Waal's approach here is with just that reverence she describes in her introductory note; and those who know other books from her pen will recognise the care, the love and the balance they have already admired. She examines various themes, typical of the tradition, together affording us imagery and examples in abundance to illustrate their profound relationship. For underlying all, in their particular monastic system, in their deep care and familiarity with the created universe, in their gentle acceptance of light and dark together and perhaps more than all in their everyday common celebration of God in all things, is a sense of unity, healing, wholeness.

The image of the traditional Celtic cross, a circle imposed on the cross is, she says, 'a powerful one, the great O of creation, the circle of the world, and the cross of redemption brought together into one whole. I was confronted here...with a starkly dramatic statement of what I was to find again and again as I came to understand better the Celtic way of seeing the world: this ability to hold things together. Here the cross makes a simple statement about the interconnection of redemption and creation, that we cannot have the light without the dark, that the two are interdependent.'

Early Celtic writers 'brought to their environment eyes washed miraculously clear by continual contemplation' and conveyed joyously and with skilled economy of words, images of beauty and precision - and all part of ordinary everyday life.

Three folds of the cloth, yet only one napkin is there;  
Three joints in the finger, but still only one finger fair;  
Three leaves of shamrock, yet no more than one shamrock to wear;  
Frost, snowflakes and ice, all in water their origin share;  
Three persons in God; to one God alone we make prayer.

Such a God is familiar to a people whose immediate reality is family, household and tribe. Relationship and rhythm are instinctive for the Celts and draw us into their own harmony and coherence in a world made whole.

ELIZABETH CSF

## Review Round-up

Prayer and meditation continue to inspire many excellent books. **Henry Morgan** has brought together in **Approaches to Prayer** (SPCK £7.95), a treasure trove for harassed prayer group leaders. Brief introductions to a wide range of ways of praying preface

numerous practical examples, designed primarily for groups but also valuable for individuals.

The next three books all follow in some way the Christian year. **Awakenings** (Harper Collins £4.99) by **Thomas Keating**, a Cistercian monk, offers reflections on the Gospels, inviting readers to be transformed and awakened to new levels of awareness by their encounters with these words and stories. As befits a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge, **John Bowker** in **A Year to Live** (SPCK £9.99) draws on a wide range of poetry, literature, history and theology to produce 'a cycle of meditations on the transforming power of the Christian story'. The readings and collects used are those from the ASB. **Janet Morley** has collected prayers which celebrate the struggle and hope of the world's poor, and the solidarity of Christians with each other, in **Bread for Tomorrow: praying with the world's poor** (SPCK/Christian Aid £6.99). The introductions to each section are marvellous meditations in themselves, and the prayers have authenticity; they are about being truthfully exposed to God in the real world.

Some of the best prayers are Janet

Morley's own, and more can be found in **All Desires Known** (SPCK £5.99). Greeted with enormous acclaim on its first publication, this expanded edition includes a complete set of collects, along with Eucharistic prayers, litanies, short prayers, psalms, and poems for public prayer and private meditation.

The many ways of contemplative prayer are the subject of **Joseph Pichler's House of Prayer** (Fount £4.99). The author runs a House of Prayer and his experience shows in this very practical guide. Each chapter explains one method and suggests various exercises to try.

Prayers of any sort may lead us into the desert, a place which **Andrew Louth** in **The Wilderness of God** (DLT £8.95) shows can be one both of real inspiration and of torture and desolation. In an engrossing investigation, which takes us from the Desert Fathers to T.S.Eliot via medieval anchorism, 16th century Carmelite reform, and the Russian forest, the wilderness emerges as a tradition that goes to the very limits of what is humanly possible, and finds God there.

HELEN JULIAN CSF

## POSTAL ADDRESSES

### EUROPE

**The Friary, Alnmouth**, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 3NJ. (0665 830213)

**Shepherd's Law, Alnwick**, Northumberland NE66 2DZ.

**S. Francis House**, 75 Deerpark Road, Belfast BT14 7PW. (0232 351480)

**S. Francis House**, 113 Gillott Road, Birmingham B16 0ET. (021 454-8302)  
(Telephone number for Minister Provincial only: 021 455-9784)

**S. Michael's House**, Soho Avenue, Handsworth, Birmingham B18 5LB. (021 554 3521)

**S. Elizabeth's House**, 33 Hampton Road, Birchfield, Birmingham B6 6AN. (021 523 0215)

**S. Francis House**, 15 Botolph Lane, Cambridge CB2 3RD. (0223 353903)

**S. Francis Convent, Compton Durville**, South Petherton, Somerset TA13 5ES. (0460 40473)

The Little Portion, 111/2 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9AN. (031 228 3077)

16 Dalserf Street, Barrowfield, Glasgow G31 4AS.

**S. Mary at the Cross, Glasshampton**, Shrawley, Worcester WR6 6TQ. (0299-896-345)

**The Friary, Hilfield**, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7BE. (0300 341345)

**S. Francis House**, 68 Laurel Road, Liverpool L7 0LW. (051 263-8581)

43 Endymion Road, Brixton, London SW2 2BU. (081 671 9401)

Holy Trinity House, Orsett Terrace, London W2 6AH. (071 723-9735)

The House of the Divine Compassion, 42 Balaam Street, Plaistow, London E13 8AQ. (071 476-5189)

10 Halcrow Street, Stepney, London E1 2EP. (071 247-6233)

Greystones S. Francis, First Avenue, Porthill, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs. ST5 8QX. (0782 636839)

**S. Francis House**, Normanby Road, Scunthorpe, South Humberside DN15 6AR. (0724 853899)

**Society of S. Francis**, Private Bag, Masasi, Tanzania.

**Society of S. Francis**, S. Barnabas Centre, Westwood, Harare, Zimbabwe. (010 263 4 27307)

### THE SECOND ORDER

Saint Mary's Convent, Freeland, Witney, Oxfordshire OX8 8AJ. (0993 881225)

The Old Parsonage, Freeland, Witney, Oxfordshire OX8 8AQ. (0993 881227)

### THE THIRD ORDER

Minister General: The Revd. Brian Hamilton, P.O. Box 327, Tauranga, New Zealand.

Minister Provincial (European Province): The Revd. Canon Stephen Platten, Lambeth Palace, London SE1 7JU. (071 928-8282)

### AMERICA

Bishopsthorpe, Southern Foreshore, P.O. Box 535, Belize City, Belize, Central America. (501-278-243)

Little Portion Friary, P.O. Box 399, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766/0399, U.S.A. (516 473-0553)

54 Old Post Road, Box 389, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766. (516 473-9434)

S. Elizabeth's Friary, 1474 Bushwick Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11207, U.S.A. (718 455-5963)

San Damiano, 573 Dolores Street, San Francisco, CA 94110, U.S.A. (415 861-1372)

S. Francis House, 3743 Army Street, San Francisco, CA 94110, U.S.A. (415 824-0288)

### THE SECOND ORDER

Poor Clares' Convent, Maryhill, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766, U.S.A.

### AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

S. Francis Friary, 1a Brighton Road, Parnell, Auckland, New Zealand. (09 771 292)

33 Carlton Gore Road, Grafton, Auckland 1, New Zealand. (09 775 054)

Hermitage of S. Bernadine of Siena, Stroud, N.S.W. 2425, Australia (049 945 372)

### THE SECOND ORDER

Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Stroud, N.S.W. 2425, Australia. (049 945303)

### PACIFIC ISLANDS

S. Mary of the Angels Friary, Haruro, P.O. Box 78, Popondetta, Northern Province, Papua New Guinea.

Douglas House, P.O. Box 3411, Lae, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea.

Anglican Church, Namaiyufa, Movi, via Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea.

Patteson House, P.O. Box 519, Honiara, Solomon Islands. (Honiara 22386)

The Friary, P.O. Box 7, Auki, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands.

La Verna Friary, Hautambu, P.O. Box 519, Honiara, Solomon Islands.

San Damiano Friary, Diocese of Hanuato'o, Kira Kira, Makira Ulawa Province, Solomon Islands.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

### HILFIELD

#### Stigmata Festival

Saturday, 19 September. 12.00 - 6.00  
(please bring your own lunch)

#### Celebrating Common Prayer

A day introducing the new Office Book led by Br Tristam and other members of the Liturgical Commission

Saturday, 24 October. 10.00 - 4.00  
(please bring your own lunch)

#### Pre-Advent Quiet Day

Saturday, 28 November. 10.00 - 4.00  
(please bring your own lunch)

### ALNMOUTH

#### Franciscan Festival at S. Nicholas' Cathedral, Newcastle

(please note slight changes in times)

Saturday, 10 October. 11.00 - 3.30  
(please bring your own lunch)

#### Lord teach us to pray

A weekend offering the chance to discover your way of meditation and contemplation according to your psychological type. The weekend will be led by Brs David Stephen and Gregory 23-24 October

### COMPTON DURVILLE

#### Myers-Briggs Weekends

Basic Workshop 9-11 Oct.

Myers-Briggs and prayer — 30 Oct.-1 Nov.

#### Creative Retreat

Lacemaking and Prayer weekend  
(no previous experience necessary)

19-23 October

Please ring Betty Watts for details on 0635 253708

#### 1993 Spring Festival

15 May. 12.00 - 4.30

# Oh that we might see better times

*Brother Damian reflects on visits to Glasgow and Prague.*

Br Edward's primary concern just now is the strengthening of area links between First and Third Orders, working on a system of natural groupings so that from time to time we can join in fellowship and worship as parts of one greater Society. Edward is not getting any younger and in preparation for his eventual retirement in '94 this linking of Third Order Areas with CSF and SSF houses (and Freeland) should hold us together. Our working together towards this is very important to our unity and fellowship as Franciscans.

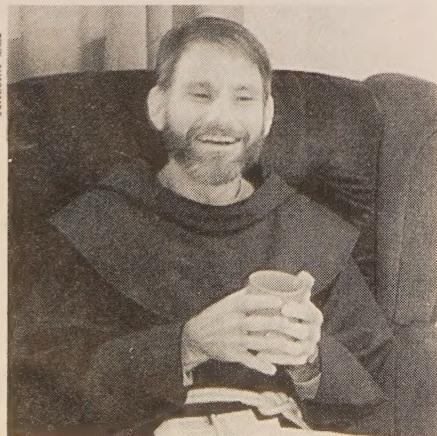
One of the links already well forged is in Scotland from where I find myself writing now - a place that has seen much activity over the summer months. Our flat is on the Scheme at Barrowfield, a mile from Glasgow's city centre, reputed to be a grim and neglected corner of urban life. In the west of Scotland the two Orders have grown up together and Benedict's ordination to the priesthood on 1st July, and the First Mass the following evening, brought an impressive gathering of friends, family, Franciscans and young folk from the Scheme, a true picture of the catholic church. Returning to Barrowfield for a weekend is very much in contrast to the celebratory atmosphere of that occasion.

The brothers have now restricted the times of open house to four week-nights; but the relating on the street and stair is unceasing. By 11 pm Compline feels somewhat overdue. We met in the chapel at this their usual time for Night Prayer and intercessions, commencing in total darkness with the ceremony of the Blessing of the Light from the new draft SSF Office Book. Child-chatter below rose above the beat of someone's radio (or was it their CD?) as we repeated the night psalm, 'Many are saying, Oh that we might see *better times*. Lift up the light of your countenance upon us Oh Lord.'

Benedict and Alan Michael had been explaining the hit-and-miss programme of the continuing debate in Barrowfield: the

*Brother Benedict*

Anselm SSF



Anselm SSF



*The Barrowfield Estate in Glasgow*

Council's lack of funds, the noticeable signs of the Scheme going downhill, and what effect the proposed move of their nearest neighbour, Celtic Football Club, would have on them. We prayed through our powerlessness.

We prayed too for the Franciscans throughout Scotland, thankful for the extension of a five year lease at Lothian Road, the brothers' friary in Edinburgh, for Basil and the encouraging progress of his Rock Trust to accommodate homeless teenagers in that city; for Ronald at Saltcoats and Giles David on Iona. Like the Tertiaries, the brothers have spread themselves around the country. While we are linking up, I wonder how serious are the people of Scotland themselves about severing the political links with England? Are those constant news flashes of mindless shelling in Sarajevo unconsciously cautioning nationalists to rethink motives and means towards obtaining *better times* for Scotland?

I had returned only a week before from another country, also desperately searching for movement and means towards *better times*. Vaclav Havel had just resigned as the Czech President and the country now seems set on a course of separation between the Czech lands and Slovakia. My hosts in Prague were respectively Fr Hilary SSM, priest in the Anglican chaplaincy, and the Conventual Friars in the Old Town. Both are symbols of unity. Hilary, resident since January, is busy learning their language while the friars, a community of seven from Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Poland, are primarily concerned with holding together and strengthening a common life in these *better times* of political freedom. For them this involves returning to the old St. James' Church founded by Franciscans in 1232. Big, neglected, dusty; now undergoing extensive renovations. Living with the smell of paint, the shavings of newly sown timber, the pulling down and the building up - make for exciting times, though, as their worship reflects,

they are presently more about restoring than going for anything new.

In contrast I met the sprightly-looking Ms Michaela Faliova, a newly elected member of the Parliament, thoroughly motivated towards another dimension of freedom. We may have looked a couple of odd characters, seated at a corner table in the Kaffee Antik, just off Wenceslas Square. She explained: 'Our opportunity has to be taken now, choice has become possible, we must move commercially towards the free market, change inevitably has to be fast.' Apparently this surge of energy towards the West could leave Slovakia behind and the nation divided without any particular effort from either side.

Eastern Europe fragments; Western Europe strains within its own vision. It is far easier to divide, far harder to unite. Within the confusions of our time I know I value efforts to link rather than to separate, to reach out in friendship and ecumenical dialogue where barriers loom large, and to claim the reconciliation that has been won for us in Christ, making real for this generation, and hopefully for the next, truly *better times*.

*Wenceslas Square, Prague*

Dominic SSF

